

2012

Tiffani Nguyen (Student Spotlight)

Alli Kolick
Iowa State University

Alison Gamm
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/uhuru>

Recommended Citation

Kolick, Alli and Gamm, Alison (2012) "Tiffani Nguyen (Student Spotlight)," *Uhuru*: Vol. 10 : Iss. 3 , Article 5.
Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/uhuru/vol10/iss3/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Uhuru by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.



TIFFANI NGUYEN

*by ALLI KOLICK
design ALISON GAMM
photo submitted*

Tiffani Nguyen has spent most of her life living in the United States. Her parents immigrated with their family to the US in 1994 in hopes to give their children more opportunities than they would have had back in Vietnam. When asked what social justice issues are most important to her, Nguyen answers, "I think that's something that I'm

still trying to figure out. There are just so many different issues going on in this world." She notes that all social justice issues are important; however, as she is still learning about the platforms of many of them, she says that she doesn't prioritize them, for the time being.

However when I asked her if any social justice issues affect her personal life, she was quite sure of her answer. "I'm always worried that people assume that I'm an illegal immigrant," says Nguyen. "Race has always been a bigger issue." Nguyen comments that in America she feels that it is always obvious that she is not from here because she has darker skin and dark, brown eyes.

"I remember when we first came here, light colored eyes fascinated me for the longest time," Nguyen recalls. She says that she's always felt like the minority. Last year Nguyen studied abroad in Argentina and Spain, and was the "American." When she visited her family in Vietnam she said that though she looked like her family, she had not lived in Vietnam since she was about four years old and did not know the culture.

The other social justice issue that is prominent in her life is one that is common among many families that immigrate to America: the language barrier. Often people think about the language barrier between one person and society but not a person and their own home.

"It's actually really common," Nguyen says. Children often serve as the bridge between their parents and society.

When we met for our interview, Nguyen had recently suffered a minor head injury and shared that it was difficult to explain to her parents what exactly had happened because she didn't know the word for "concussion" in Vietnamese. All her parents knew was that she had gone to the hospital.

While there is a language barrier that she deals with on a daily basis, Nguyen tries to improve her linguistic skills as she speaks English, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

Nguyen is completing her final year here at Iowa State University, and will obtain her degree in Sociology with a certificate in Leadership and Public Service in the spring.